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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003975

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD,S RASHID DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS
INCREASED VIOLENCE AND FRUSTRATION

Classified By: Joseph Gregoire, PRT Team Leader, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: PRT Baghdad Iraq Provincial Action Officer (IPAO) met with Rashid District Advisory Council (DAC) Chairman Sabeeh Radhy Kaaby and attended the weekly DAC meeting there on 18 October. Both the Chairman and the broader membership expressed deep frustration over the deteriorating security situation in the Rashid District and the Doura neighborhood in particular. The Masafee neighborhood within Doura was the first focus area cleared by Coalition Forces (CF) at the advent of Operation Together Forward under the Baghdad Security Plan. DAC members universally shared their disappointment that CF have been unable to prevent insurgent and militia activity and reported that the overall level of violence in the district is worse than before the security operation began. Kaaby stated that the calm following phase one of Operation Together Forward lasted approximately six weeks, and that residents now feel bitter toward the United States for being unable to keep them safe even as they condemn CF raids in the neighborhood. DAC members particularly complained of a purported raid on the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) building in the Hay Al Amil area of Rashid on 17 October. The DAC also discussed the increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the DAC's efforts to distribute gasoline and cooking oil to each household in the district. END SUMMARY.

Resurgence of Violence

12. (C) Rashid DAC Chairman Sabeeh Radhy Kaaby began the meeting with IPAO by stating that the overall security situation in Rashid is worse now than before Operation Together Forward clearing operations began and claimed the number of attacks in the district may be "double." He reported that the number of "bombings, shootings, assassinations, mortar attacks and kidnappings have all gone up." He charged that the Iraqi Army and Police only react and that they don't seem to coordinate their work. He believes that they are losing the trust of the people, and that they should reach out to imams and tribal leaders to help secure the district. Kaaby estimated that half of the Rashid schools are now closed due to security concerns and that children are simply staying home. He also reported that a growing number of both Sunni and Shia residents are being forced from their homes. He thinks that most of the IDPs are staying with family or have moved to other parts of Baghdad. He was not aware of any reports that IDPs are squatting in public areas as is the case in other parts of the city.

13. (C) The eleven members present at the DAC meeting each

reported instances of violence in their respective neighborhoods, personal threats that they have received, and the lack of progress on infrastructure projects. Members reported shooting and mortar attacks after the curfew in mahalas 826 and 812 the night of 17 October and offered that mahalas 828 and 830 are very dangerous. The Hay Al Jazar neighborhood representative estimated that nine or ten mortars hit the area each night. (COMMENT: These areas are all within Doura and on the edge of Masafee/Doura focus area. END COMMENT) Mahalas 893 and 871 were judged "out of control" and "lawless" due to mortar and rocket activity. (COMMENT: These two neighborhoods are on the opposite side of the district bordering the Baghdad International Airport and across from the Mansour District Ameriya focus area. END COMMENT)

14. (C) Rashid DAC chairman Kaaby noted that many members are unable or afraid to make the trip from their homes to the DAC headquarters. Kaaby urged his DAC colleagues to report any personal threats to him. He questioned the policy forbidding them from carrying weapons or hiring private bodyguards. They stated that they feel vulnerable having to wait in line to drive into the DAC building compound and are generally afraid to use their DAC identification at checkpoints. Several members complained that infrastructure projects were halted due to security concerns and stated that construction should go on regardless. Kaaby shouted them down and retorted that doing so is unrealistic; the only way progress will be made, he said, is if the different groups "put their heads together instead of fighting."

Frustration with Coalition Forces

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15. (C) Kaaby gave anecdotal accounts of Iraqi Army and CF raids and the random detention of people whom he "knows are innocent," and opined that this happens every day and has a negative effect on the way people look at the United States. Kaaby claimed that his own house was raided a few weeks ago, but could not say exactly when. During the DAC meeting, one member asked if Coalition Forces can ask DAC members about their neighbors before raiding their homes. He added that he is afraid people assume DAC members are encouraging the raids since it is known they have contacts with Civil Affairs teams that patrol the neighborhoods.

16. (C) The DAC representative from the Hay Al Amil area of Rashid reported that U.S. forces raided the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) building on 17 October at 5 p.m. and handed IPAO a written account demanding an official apology. (NOTE: PRT Baghdad forwarded a copy of the original and a translation, as well as a separate report to Multi-National Division Baghdad (MND-B). END NOTE) The NAC representative claimed that the NAC guard force was forcibly disarmed while the U.S. troops tried to break down the front door to the building before ordering one of the guards to open it with his key. According to the document, the troops kicked down the doors to the NAC chairman's office, the administration office, and the conference room. After searching the three rooms, the troops reportedly apologized for entering the building and told the guards they had not realized it is the NAC headquarters. The document passed to IPAO also asserts that U.S. forces visited the NAC on five previous occasions and that it is about two hundred meters from the nearest U.S. Army base. The document states the NAC will suspend its relations with the Coalition Forces until the NAC receives an official apology.

Distribution of Gasoline and White Gas

17. (C) The chairman and other members of the Rashid DAC

reported progress on their efforts to distribute gasoline and cooking oil or "white gas" provided by the Government of Iraq to each household. There was a report of uniformed Iraqi security forces, thought to be members of a militia, cutting in line and stealing gas. Kaaby told the members overseeing the distribution to write down vehicle numbers if this happens again. It was also reported that certain neighborhoods in Rashid had been delivered cooking fuel as often as six times before other areas were serviced at all. Kaaby stated that this had been straightened out and that his goal is for each household to receive its full fuel allocation before any household is serviced again. He also said that priority should be given to IDPs and the widows and children of persons killed in terrorist attacks.

Comment

18. (C) The information provided by DAC chairman Sabeeh Radhy Kaaby and the other members of the Rashid DAC is anecdotal. The rise in violence in areas adjoining the Masafee/Doura focus area and across from the Ameriya focus area is consistent with reporting from other districts where similar violence near focus areas is occurring.

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